



# County Partnership Award

## Gaithersburg Business Alliance Department of Liquor Control



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Dorothy Moore  
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Carlos Grajeda  
Ron Price  
Officer Scott Cameron  
Diane Wurdeman  
Sgt. Scott Scarff  
Sgt. Mary Whalen  
MPO Randy Rude

MPO John Leache  
MPO Rudy Wagner  
Sgt. Jacques Croom  
Brian Hopkins  
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Mounting concerns about underage drinking and over-service of alcohol in Gaithersburg created a need to develop an alliance to engage businesses licensed to sell/serve alcohol. The Gaithersburg Business Alliance (GBA), developed through the Department of Liquor Control Community Outreach Office, is model public/private collaboration. Partners include the City of Gaithersburg Police, Montgomery County Police (6<sup>th</sup> District), Extra Eyes, State and County Highway Safety, the City Manager's Office, the Board of License Commissioner's, the Century Council, Maryland Hospitality Education Foundation, and the Department of Liquor Control.

The GBA conducted 14 Cops in Shops Police details, a cooperative program that requires the willing participation of licensed establishments. Police posing as employees of the business or customers, are stationed inside the premises to apprehend underage persons when they attempt to buy alcoholic beverages. Enforcement officers also have a secondary educational role, which is to share their expertise with employees on such subjects as false or fake ID, the signs of intoxication, and the physical and behavioral characteristics of minors. The objective of the program is not just to apprehend underage buyers but to hold them accountable for their acts. Additionally, the program leaves employees with a better understanding of their legal responsibilities and the knowledge necessary to fulfill them. A public awareness and media campaign was also launched to establish greater community collaboration and support. Signs, posters, press releases and training seminars were used to achieve an increase in community perception that

"Enforcement is working with local businesses." Citizens trained by police called "extra eyes" worked outside the businesses. Armed with police radios, they reported violations occurring in the parking lot or surrounding areas.

The Board of License Commissioners (BLC) sought out businesses to participate in the program, the BLC is a crucial link in identifying establishments, owners and management.

State certified alcohol server trainings were offered to the 150 Gaithersburg licensed establishments in Spanish and English. Business Risk Assessments were conducted to identify high-risk policies and procedures of establishments and servers. Trainers provided feedback to the businesses to develop strategies to reduce the potential for continued risk of underage drinking and over-service of alcohol.

These interventions will have long-term effects in the Gaithersburg community. Changing social norms will reduce the negative consequences of irresponsible alcohol service in businesses, eliminate mixed messages, and increase effectiveness of policies and laws.

The GBA intervention strategy and materials are currently being used as a model by other communities. Combined efforts of enforcement and prevention with licensed establishments, demonstrate the effectiveness of working together to reach common goals of safe communities and healthy businesses.